

countless community organizations and has been recognized for her efforts with numerous awards and commendations. Among her more recent honors are an honorary degree from Aquinas College, the Giant's Award from the Coalition of Grand Rapids Organizations, the Grand Rapids Y.W.C.A.'s Tribute to Women Award, and the Grand Rapids NAACP Role Model Award; she has also been inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame.

Widowed twice, Helen was married to journalist Earl Wilkens, who died of tuberculosis at an early age. She later married Dr. Robert Claytor, the first black physician in Grand Rapids. Throughout her years, Helen has been blessed with the support of a very loving and caring family that includes her three children, Roger Wilkens, Judith Claytor, and Sharon Claytor Peters.

Mr. Speaker, there is not enough time in the day to thoroughly highlight the many contributions that Helen had made to our society. Celebrating 90 years of life is truly a blessing. I want to again personally extend my heartfelt wishes to Helen for a joyous day of celebration with her family and many friends that will gather to honor her on April 17 at the Grand Rapids YWCA. Thank you, Helen, for being the outstanding citizen that you are.

HONORING ANNA-MARIE STRANGE FOR GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce Anna-Marie Strange, daughter of Beth and Sam Strange of Kasilof, as the latest Kenai Peninsula recipient of the Girl Scout Gold Award. Anna-Marie, a fifth generation Alaskan, is the granddaughter of Barbara and Ed Meier and Tom and Ned Strange, Anchorage.

Anna-Marie a member of Senior Troop 994, has been active in Girl Scouting for 11 years and recently received a Lifetime Membership in Girl Scouting as a gift from her long time Girl Scout mentor. For several years she served as an A.C.E. (junior counselor), at the Rainbow Trails Girl Scout Day Camp, and was a unit leader at the Nikiski Day Camp in 1994. She also completed the leader in training and counselor in training programs. In 1994, she traveled to Hokkaido, Japan with Susitna Council's Japanese Exchange Program. During the 1995-96 school year Anna-Marie served as a leader for Daisy Girl Scout Troop 32, Tustumena School. She has also worked as junior core-staff for the 1993 and 1995 Susitna Council encampments.

For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Anna-Marie cross-referenced the Project WILD, Project Learning Tree, programs as well as the films and activities available at the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge with the various levels of the Girl Scout program. She then compiled a book for local leaders to use when incorporating outdoor activities in their troop programming. To culminate and test out her completed project, Anna-Marie hosted a Wide-Game for local Girl Scouts at the refuge in late August.

In addition to Girl Scouting, Anna-Marie has been active in many outside activities. She

participated in swim team and cross-country skiing at Skyview, played the bassoon in both the Kenai Peninsula Community Band and Orchestra, and is active in Soldotna Methodist Church. She was salutatorian of Skyview High School, Band Student of the Year, and a member of the All State Honor Band and Borough Honor Band. She received the John Philip Sousa Award and Marine Corps Semper Parvum Award in 1996. She is a member of the National Honor Society and Japanese Club, and received a Student of the Year scholarship from the Soldotna Chamber of Commerce. Anna-Marie is a certified life guard and swimming instructor, and worked at the Skyview pool for the past year. She also volunteered as assistant waterfront director for the local Cub Scout day camp in 1995 and in 1996 at the exhibits department of the Palmer State Fair.

Anna-Marie is now a freshman at Gustavus Adolphus College, Minnesota, majoring in music education.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CAROLYN C. KILPATRICK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, because I was unavoidably detained in the 15th Congressional District of Michigan, I was not present at rollcall vote No. 72 and rollcall vote No. 73. Had I been present for these votes, I would have voted "aye" for rollcall vote No. 72 and "aye" for rollcall vote No. 73.

ON BRIAN BLANKENBURG'S ATTAINMENT OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Brian Blankenburg of North Olmsted, OH, who will be honored this month for his recent attainment of Eagle Scout.

The attainment of Eagle Scout is a high and rare honor requiring years of dedication to self-improvement, hard work, and the community. Each Eagle Scout must earn 21 merit badges, 12 of which are required, including badges in: lifesaving; first aid; citizenship in the community; citizenship in the Nation; citizenship in the world; personal management of time and money; family life; environmental science; and camping.

In addition to acquiring and proving proficiency in those and other skills, an Eagle Scout must hold leadership positions within the troop where he learns to earn the respect and hear the criticism of those he leads.

The Eagle Scout must live by the Scouting Law, which holds that he must be: trustworthy, loyal, brave, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, clean, and reverent.

And the Eagle Scout must complete an Eagle project, which he must plan, finance, and evaluate on his own. It is no wonder that only 2 percent of all boys entering scouting achieve this rank.

Brian's Eagle project was the repair, refurbishing, and repainting of ticket booths and

parking lot lampposts at North Olmsted High School.

My fellow colleagues, let us join Boy Scouts of America Troop 53 in recognizing and praising Brian for his achievement.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VETERANS' NURSING CARE AVAILABILITY ACT OF 1997

HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Veterans' Nursing Care Availability Act of 1997. This important legislation will help correct a flaw that exists in the way that the Department of Veterans Affairs ranks applications for its State Extended Care Facilities Grant Program.

The State Extended Care Facilities Grant Program provides Federal funding for up to 65 percent of the total cost for the construction of State veterans nursing homes. Many States have been desperately trying to get a grant under this program to assist in the construction of State veterans nursing homes. However, despite documented need, they have been unable to get the Federal funding necessary to move forward.

Because of the overall inequity of the system that the VA uses to rank State applications, I have decided to introduce legislation that will ensure that States with the greatest veteran need receive priority funding.

The current system that the VA uses to rank State applications gives priority to States that have never received a similar grant in the past. While on the surface this may seem logical, the practical effect is that States with the highest veteran's need are often neglected because they received a grant sometime in the past. As a matter of fairness, I believe applications should be ranked solely on the needs of veterans.

The legislation I am introducing will correct this inequity by ensuring that States with the highest need receive priority. The Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that there should be 4 nursing home beds for every 1,000 veterans in a State. Using this determination, my bill would have applications based on a formula where veteran need is defined as a number of veterans in the State multiplied by 4 and divided by 1,000 (need = vet. population * 4/1,000).

Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation for our Nation's veterans. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in working for its enactment.

HONORING TISBE FALCONE DIMEO

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to praise a woman whose contributions are the kind which go unnoticed by society at large but which mean so much to the people who are directly affected. Tisbe Falcone DiMeo is such a person. For more than 20